Determinants of Satisfaction of Foreigner to Private Hospital in Bangkok

Promporn Tharamongkol¹, Thasana Boonkwan²

¹School of Graduate Studies department of International Business,
Master of Business Administration, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce
Telephone: 0-1848-9702, Fax: 0-2276-2126, Email: prompomt@yahoo.com

²School of Business, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce
Tel: 0-0697-6333, Fax: 0-2277-1943, Email: thasana_boo@utcc.ac.th
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\(^1\) School of Graduate Studies department of International Business, Master of Business Administration, the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to study the foreigner satisfaction to private hospital in Bangkok. The result summary would be the benefit not only for the patients' satisfaction level identification but also for the future plan in service. The sample of 213 patients was collected by accidental sampling technique from March to April 2006. The instrument was a rating scale on the degree of expectations and perception of service quality. The Study showed that the foreigner dissatisfaction in reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness dimension. All of these are the important level which customer concern.

The study recommends the private hospital should improve the service quality in customer dissatisfied dimension. And focused on the preventive medicine in order to protect, promote and maintain health. To build differentiate for competitiveness by to be the specific medicine such as heart disease, Cerebropathy, osteoporosis and cancer.

Key Words: foreigner, satisfaction, private hospital, Bangkok
1. Introduction

One of the fastest growing industries in the service sector is the health-care industry. These forces of change have begun to exert significant pressures on health-care providers to reassess their strategy (Andaleeb, 1998). Many providers are beginning to realize that providing customer satisfaction is a key element of strategy and an important determinant of long-term viability and success.

The Asia countries seeking to attract foreigners to their medical facilities, Thailand is by far the leading country. The combination of low-cost and high-quality medical care is the main reasons that many foreigners chose Thailand when seeking medical attention (Buttle 1996). In 2002, the number of foreign patients seeking treatment in Thailand grew by 13% from the previous year. The Thai government sees vast potential in fast-tracking the development of Thailand's healthcare and health related service. The Thai government set aims to firmly establish Thailand's leader position on two fronts as both a health tourism hub of Asia and the wellness capital of Asia.

So, this research will studies about the customer satisfaction of foreigner to the private hospital in Bangkok and determinant the satisfaction factors to led the all provider can understand what customer want and delivering the superior medical service.

2. Literature Review

Customer satisfaction is a function of the customer's assessment of service quality, product quality and price (Parasuraman 1985). And Zeithaml define the service quality is a consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority. Service quality is considered a critical determinant of competitiveness. Service quality can helps an organization to differentiate itself from other organization and through it gain a lasting competitive advantage (Moore 1987).

The popular instrument to measuring service quality is SERVQUAL. It aim to measure perceptions of service across the five service quality dimension identified by Parasuraman. Tangible: Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel, Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately, Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service, Assurance: Including competence, courtesy, credibility and security knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence, Empathy: including access,
communication, understanding the customer caring and individualized attention that the firm provides to its customer. The model suggested service quality as the gap between customer's expectations (E) and their perception of the service provider's performance (P). Hence, the service quality scores (Q) can be measured by subtracting customer's perception score from customer's expectation score. \( Q = P - E \). Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) have also discussed that there are five key discrepancies that can influence customer evaluations of service quality.

**Gap1: Customers' expectations versus management perceptions:** as a result of the lack of a marketing research orientation, inadequate upward communication and too many layers of management.

**Gap2: Management perceptions versus service specifications:** as a result of inadequate commitment to service quality, a perception of unfeasibility, inadequate task standardization and an absence of goal setting.

**Gap3: Service specifications versus service delivery:** as a result of role ambiguity and conflict, poor employee-job fit and poor technology-job fit, inappropriate supervisory control systems, lack of perceived control and lack of teamwork.

**Gap4: Service delivery versus external communication:** as a result of inadequate horizontal communications and propensity to over-promise.

**Gap5: The discrepancy between customer expectations and their perceptions of the service delivered:** as a result of the influences exerted from the customer side and the shortfalls (gaps) on the part of the service provider. In this case, customer expectations are influenced by the extent of personal needs, word of mouth recommendation and past service experiences.

For this paper, the researcher focused on the Gap5 is that between customer's expectation of service and perception of the service actually delivered.

3. Methodology

For this research collected data by the questionnaire concerned on demographic, degree of importance, expectation and perception and lunched on the population of forsigner users of private hospital in Bangkok. In order to collect related data, the study designed the questionnaire in three sections. The section one consists of general data such as age, sex and nationality. The second section consists of the important level and five-point Likert scale, with two main SERVQUAL questions of 28 parameters. Each scale item was anchored at the numeral 1: 1 = "strongly disagree"; 5 = "strongly agree".
Structured questionnaires would be distributed to the foreigners who ever take the medical service in private hospital in Bangkok. The data would be gathered from the Bangkok area especially in private hospital area such as Bumrungrad hospital, Bangkok hospital, B.N.H hospital and Samitivij hospital etc.

4. Results

General demographic

This study involved 213 patients' responses. In our survey, 52.58% of patients were female and 47.42% male. Seventy five point five – eight percent of patients were 18 – 49 years old. Of those who responded to the questions, 61.50% were Asia and the University degree is the major of education or 54.93%. The most income is less than $5,000 or 43.75%.

The important level of medical treatment

From the study found that the foreigner who used the private hospital think that the reliability factor is the most important factor or 4.08, the second is Assurance factor is 4.00 and the third is empathy or 3.98, the forth is price factor or 3.95, the fifth is responsiveness factor or 3.92 and the last important factor is tangible factor or 3.78.

According to the Parasuraman and Zeithaml, They found that the important factor is reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangible respectively.

This study show the related between this study and Parasuraman that the reliability is the most important factor to the patient and the tangible is the less important factor.

The customer expectation

From the study found that the customer expectation of the foreigner is high. The mean score is form 3.81 to 4.43. The highest mean score is assurance factor or 4.43, the second is reliability factor or 4.12 and the last is tangible factor or 3.18. And the total of mean score of customer expectation is 4.00.

The mean score of expectation in every factor is high related to the natural of human that care for their healthy. For hospitals especially, the patient who used hospital expect high that they will better after user medical treatment.
The customer perception

From the study found that the customer perception after the customer used the private hospital is high. The factors have mean score from 3.76 to 4.02. The highest mean score is reliability factor or 4.02, the second is empathy factor or 3.99 and the last is the price factor or 3.76 and the total mean average score is 3.93.

The customer perception is high. It implies that the hospital service quality is standard. The standard is not the technical standard but it is the standard of customer perception.

The customer satisfaction

From the study found that the customer satisfaction of the foreigner who used the private hospital is high. The mean score is from -0.05 to 0.22. The tangible is the factor that have highest score is -0.05, the second is empathy factor or 0.05 and the last is price factor or 0.22 and the total average mean score of customer satisfaction is 0.07.

Relationship between customer expectation and customer perception

The hypothesis test, the difference and mean score of the expectation and the perception of the service quality in private hospital found that there were the differences mean score of factors as follow: Reliability factor, responsiveness factor, assurance factor, price factor and total of all factor. And other factor that has no difference of mean score is tangible and empathy factor. It implies that the customer is satisfaction in service quality of private hospital.

From the study found that the customer is dissatisfaction in assurance the most. And the second, the customer is dissatisfied in reliability that is the main important of service quality. It implies that the customer want to the hospital to guarantee the result of service more than the hospital to communicate to the customer. The point is the hospitals that try to communication to patient about the service in the hospital but sometime, the communication between the physician and the patient is misunderstanding about the treatment. Or the patient did not understand the physician explains. It is upon the background, the cultural, and education of patients.

In conclusion, patients are care consumers, and, like all consumers, they want good service. Delivering high quality consistently is difficult but profitable for a service organization
5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The hospital should build the reliability by reduce the mistake or medical error and conveying an image of physician competence to customers is perhaps a more challenging task. To develop and maintain hospitals image, hospital staff must rely on the experience properties attributable to competence. Empathy, the result show that improving the quality of communication with patients by explaining medical procedures, discussing questions of concern and by consulting with them regarding their care can greatly enhance customer satisfaction. Responsiveness and price, the hospital bills provoke the reaction that they are inordinately high, it will lead to customer satisfaction.

Nowadays, the consumers have been marked by a shift in emphasis from curative medicine to preventive medicine. Preventive medicine focused on health of individuals and the community in order to protect, promote and maintain health, prevent disease, disability and premature death. So, hospital should set the approach strategy to response of the market trend such as set new campaign to serve customer who interest their healthy. Moreover, the hospital should build the differentiate by specific medicine such as the specific medicine such as heart disease, Cerebropathy, osteoporosis and cancer for competitiveness.

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Bibliography


